

African American Women and Breast Cancer

Breast cancer affects many women of every race every year, but recent studies show that it affects African American women at higher rates. The rate of breast cancer in African American women has risen immensely over the past 20 years. Black women are now 41% more likely to experience a breast cancer-related death than white women. Breast Cancer Prevention Partners (BCPP) suggest that the use of some cosmetics may be the problem. Some cosmetics that are often marketed to African American women contain dangerous ingredients which can lead to breast cancer. These cosmetics include skin lighteners, nail products, and fragrances used in beauty products. Skin lighteners contain mercury, a product associated with many health problems, including cancer. Women of color make up a large percentage of those who work with nails. Individuals working in nail salons are exposed to cancer-causing products like formaldehyde and hydroquinone. Black women who are nail technicians have reported lots of health issues, including breast cancer. Diethyl phthalate is a common cause of breast cancer and can be found in fragrances used in cosmetics.

What can be done to decrease the rate of breast cancer and breast cancer-related deaths in African Americans? There are several things that can be done moving forward. First, we can do more research on breast cancer rates in African American women. We could look into why African American women are affected by these cancers at higher rates than other groups. Are the problems caused by products, genetics, or something different? Second, we can get the word out. Educating people with facts about cancer-causing products that are dangerous and should not be used is an important way to empower people. We can even work on getting rid of these products and replacing them with safe alternatives. Finally, we can increase access to mammograms and breast cancer treatment. Early diagnosis and treatment are key to breast cancer survival. A combination of these solutions will hopefully decrease the rate of breast cancer in African American women

Works Cited

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